

Homer's Ideas and  
Representation of the Gods as  
Seen in the Odyssey in Books  
I-VI, IX-XIII

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The Gods of Homer are not mere indefinite images of fancy loosely connected with the world; on the contrary they are active, realities ruling the world with intelligent foresight. These powerful beings are in a human mould though free from many of the limitations and difficulties of human life.

Their manifestations as the epic writer presents them show their powers as personalities, their control of nature and its phenomena, their direction of men's lives providentially, and their more intimate, reciprocal connection with men when they answer prayers and assume human form.

Powers as Personalities.

I. Powers belong to the Homeric Gods in a superlative degree. They are painted as an all knowing, all seeing, almighty- beings who live forever and to whom distance is no hindrance. They surpass in beauty and possessions. They can become invisible at will and are hard to influence or to master.

All knowing:-

"Come they tell me, for the gods know all things, which one of the gods restrains me and binds me from my course." IV.379. IV.468.

"Then Penelope said, ' If thou be a god or obey a voice from god, come, tell me of that hapless one whether he still lives and sees the light of the sun or is dead and in the house of Hades." IV, 830.

Almighty:-

"But Zeus gives good and ill to one in one way and to another in another: for he is almighty." IV,237.

"The Gods call it moly. It is hard for mortals to dig it up, but the gods can do all things." X,305.

All Seeing:-

"You will come upon the grazing cows and sturdy flocks of the sun who sees and hears all things." XI,109.

"These are the cattle and sturdy flocks of the dread sun who sees all things and hears all things."XI,109.

Ever Living:-

"But Ilios gave it not because he feared the gods who live forever." I,263.

Distance no hindrance:-

"Easily a god can, if willing, save a man even at a distance." III, 231.

"Kalypso seeing him(Hermes) recognized him; for the immortal gods do not fail to know each other even if they live far apart." V, 77.

Most beautiful:-

"White armed Nausikaa led their sport just as Artemis goes down the mountain, and down the long slope of Laŷgetos or Erymathos rejoicing in the wild boars and the swift deer and with her the nymphs, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus sport wildly and Leto's heart rejoices; for her daughter overtops them all by head and brow and easily marked is she though all are fair." VI, 101.

Great Possessions:-

"Then you will arrive at the island of Thrinakia. There the numerous kine and strong flocks of the Sun feed.--Seven droves of kine and as many beautiful flocks

of sheep, fifty in each. No young are born to them nor do they ever die. Goddesses are their shepherds, fair-haired nymphs, Phaethousa and Lampete, whom the exalted Sun divine Neaira bore." XII, 127; IV, 78; XI, 108.

"I prayed to all the gods who hold the open sky." XII, 337; XIII, 55; V, 169; VI, 243.

"Having spoken thus bright-eyed Athena went away to Olympus where they say the abodes of the gods stand fast forever. It is not disturbed by wind nor wet by rains nor does the snow come near, but the upper air spreads cloudless and bright sunlight plays over all. There the blessed gods enjoy themselves all day long." Vo. VI, 41.

"Thus he (Poseidon) spoke and lashed his full-maned steeds and arrived at Aigai where his glorious palace stands." V. 380.

"The cave has two entrances. One to the north belonging to men; one to the south for the gods and there men do not go at all but it is an entrance for the immortals." Vol. XIII, 109.

Invisibility:-

"But Circe going on before bound a ram and a

black ewe to the black ship, passing us lightly by. When a god does not wish it, who can with his eyes see him going here and there." Vol. X. 571.

Hard to influence:-

"Agamemnon wished to detain the people in order that he might appease the dreadful wrath of Athena.

Foolish one, for he did not know that she might not be persuaded; for the minds of the everlasting gods are not easily changed." III, 144.

Hard to master:-

"Hard is it for a mortal man to master a God." Vol. IV, 397.

Limitations.

Though possessed of all these powers the gods are not without limitations. At times they must restrain their anger and in their absence things occur of which they have no knowledge and of which they do not approve.

Sometimes things are even beyond the power of the gods; though they wish they cannot ward off death from beloved mortals, nor can they brook the sight of Scylla and be glad, nor save a man from Charybdis.

They depend on nature and material things to some degree, and are described as awaiting the light of the sun before action and use sanals and horses. They eat and drink.

Limited By other Gods:-

Zeus speaking to Athena says, " Poseidon shall curb his anger because he cannot strive against all the immortals." I, 77.

"Alas, so then the gods have changed their plans regarding Odysseus while I was among the Ethopians and already he is near the land of the Phaiakians where it is destined that he escape the great coil of evil." Vol. V, 287.

Things beyond the power of the gods:-

"But death common to all not even the gods themselves are able to ward off from a beloved man when the destructive lot of death comes." III, 236.

"To me though hoping, these things could never be, not even if the gods themselves were willing." III, 227.

" Here dwells Scylla, uttering hideous cries; her voice like that of a young dog and she herself an evil monster. None can behold her and be glad, not even if a



god met her." XII, 85.

"May you not be there when it (Charybdis) goes down; for no one could save you from evil, not even the Earth-shaker." XII, 106.

Dependent on natural phenomena:-

" Dawn from her couch by high Pithonus rose to bring light to the immortals and to men." V. 1.

Dependent on material things:-

"Thus he spoke and the guide, the Speedy-comer, did not disobey. Immediately he buckled on his sandals, immortal made of gold which bore him alike over the water and the mainland along with the breath of the wind. He took his wand with which he charms the eyes of men whom he wishes and again arouses those asleep. With this in hand the strong messenger flew." V. 43.

"Speaking thus the goddess laid a table, loading it with ambrosia and mixing ruddy nectar; and so the guide, the Speedy-comer, ate and drank. " V, 95.

"Thus having spoken he(Poseidon) lashed his full-maned steeds and arrived at Aigai where his glorious

palace stands." V. 380.

### Organization of the Gods.

These potential beings are not without means of expressing their power. They are well organized, and sit in assembly with a supreme ruler, and have a well regulated distribution of power. A messenger stands ready to do their bidding.

#### Assembly:-

"The others(beside Poseidon) were assembled in in the palace of Zeus Olympos and among them the father of men and of the gods began to speak, for he remembered the blameless Aegisthos and mindful of him he addressed the immortals. " I, 25.

"The gods sat in council and among them was Zeus who thunders from on high whose strength is the greatest of them all. To them Athena mindful of Odysseus told of his many troubles." V, 3.

#### Ruler:-

"It is not possible for any other god to cross the will of aegis-bearing Zeus nor set it at naught."  
V. 103.

"The gods sat in council and among them aegis-bearing Zeus who thunders from on high, whose strength is greatest of them all." V, 3.

" I sacrificed on the shore to Zeus son of Kronos who rules all things." IX, 552.

" I sacrificed a sacred ox to dark-clouded Zeus, son of Kronos, who is lord of all." XIII, 25.

Degress of powers:-

"I will send a wind to follow in order that you may come unharmed to your native land if the gods who hold the open sky are willing, for they are stronger than I both to plan and to fulfill." V, 167.

"For Zeus the son of Kronos made him steward of the winds to calm them and to stir them up at will." X.21.

"The great Earth-shaker did not forget the threats which he at first threatened great Odysseus and he asked the will of Zeus.

'Oh father Zeus I shall no longer be honored among the immortal gods if mortals, the Phaiakians, do not honor me at all, who are indeed of my own family.

I intended that he should return home after suffering many ills. I did not try to cut him off from returning altogether for you promised once for all and gave consent.'" XIII,125.

II. The gods, cause all the phenomena of nature. At their commands winds blow, storms break, waves roll, One brings in the day while another removes with dense clouds. Thunder and lightening come from them and "Zeus brings around the seventh day". Different divinities at times control the same elements but there seems to be no serious clashing of interests.

POWER OF THE GODS OVER  
NATURAL PHENOMENA.

Over winds.

Aiolos, Steward of Winds appointed by Zeus.

"For the son of Kronos made him(Aiolos) steward of the winds to calm them and to sooth them at his will." X,21.

Aiolos governing the winds.

"He (Aiolos) gave me a sack,- flaying therefore a new-year ox,- and in it bound the courses of the blustering winds,-----upon the hollow ship he tied

the sack with a bright cord of silver, that not a breath might stir, however slight. Then for my aid he sent the west wind forth, to blow and bear along my ship and men." X, 19.

Winds sent by Zeus:-

"When we arrived at the steep heights of Maleia, far-seeing Zeus sent a mournful journey and poured forth a blast of shrill winds and great waves rolled high like mountains." III, 288.

"Now against the ships cloud-gathering Zeus stirred up the north winds in a fierce tempest and concealed at the same time sea and land with his clouds." IX, 67.

"But when the third watch of the night came and the stars passed the zenith, cloud-gathering Zeus sent forth a furious wind in a fierce tempest and hid with clouds the earth and sky." XII, 312.

Winds sent by Poseidon:-

"But these on their return offended Athena who stirred up an evil wind and great billows." V, 109.

Wind sent by Kalypso:-

"She (Kalypso) sent a soft and gentle breeze."  
V, 268.

Wind sent by Circe:-

"And behind our dark prowed ship Circe, a fair-haired goddess with human voice sent a favorable wind to fill our sails, a good companion." XI, 6.

" And for our aid behind our dark-prowed ship, fair-haired Circe sent a fair wind to fill our sails. She a mighty goddess with a human voice." XII, 149.

Winds sent by the gods in general

"But I went on to Pylos nor did the wind abate since god sent it to blow." III, 182.

"But when from there the return seemed safe quickly the gods turned the winds and they came homeward."  
IV, 519.

"When I had appeased the anger of the everliving gods, I sailed and the immortals sent winds for me."  
IV, 583.



Winds heedless of the gods:-

"How could any one escape utter destruction if by chance a sudden storm of wind would come, the south wind or the blustering west wind which very often destroy ships, heedless of the sovereign Gods." XII, 289.

Great billows:-

From Poseidon.

"While he pondered these things in his heart and mind Poseidon, the Earth-shaker, stirred up a great wave, terrible and greivous with bended crest and drove it upon him." V, 365.

From Athena.

"But these on their return off~~ended~~ Athena who stirred up an evil wind and great waves." V, 109.

"A divine power lulled the waves." XII, 169.

Clouds:-

"The son of Kronos sent a dark claud above our ship and the deep was dark below." XII, 405.

"With clouds does Zeus overcast the broad heavens." V, 303.

"Now against our ship cloud-gathering Zeus stirred up the north wind in a fierce tempest and concealed at the same time sea and land with his clouds." IX, 67; XII, 312.

Rains from Zeus:-

"Grape vines bear wine in their heavy clusters and the rains of Zeus make them grow." IX, 111.

"For the fruitful land bears rich grapes and the rain of Zeus increase them for us." IX, 358.

Thunder from Zeus:-

"At the same time Zeus thundered and hurled his thunderbolts at the ship. The whole ship quivered when struck by the bolt of Zeus and filled with sulphur smoke. My comrades fell from the ship. God cut them off from returning home." XII, 415.

"Nor was Zeus long unmindful who slew him throwing his gleaming thunderbolt." V, 128.

The succession of days from Zeus:-

"For six days afterward my trusty men still feasted, for they drove away the best of the Sun's kine; when Zeus, the son of Kronos, brought round the seventh

day, then the wind ceased to blow a gale and we in haste embarked and set forth on the open sea, setting our mast and hoisting the white sail." XII,397.

Wandering rocks:-

"The blessed gods call them the wanders<sup>er</sup>. This way not even winged things can pass, not even the gentle doves which carry ambrosia to Zeus. One of them the smooth rock bears away but the father puts another in to fill the number." XII, 61.

III. As the gods are imminent in nature so they direct eve ything human. Homer says, "All things lie in the lap of the gods" whether the sailor shall return safely from the sea whether men shall be happy or death and dark fate awaits them; joys and sorrows are from the gods; in fact they are described as weaving the threads of destiny. Talents, honors and possessions are their gifts.

THE POWERS OF THE GODS OVER MEN.

Sickness and health:-

" As when the precious life is watched by children in a father, who lies in sickness, suffering great pain and slowly wasting, -for a hostile power assails him, - and when the man thus prized the gods set free from danger; so precious in Odysseus eyes appeared the land and trees." V, 394.

Death:-

Death sent by Apollo.

"These even threatened the immortal gods of Olympos to raise the din of furious war. They strove to place Ossa on Olympos and Pelion on leafy Ossa in order that the heavens might be scaled and they would have accomplished it if they had reached the measure of their strength but the son of Zeus whom fair-haired Leto bore destroyed both before the downy hair below the temples had sprung and covered their cheeks with fresh beard." XI, 314.

Death sent by Artemis.

" Thus was it when the rosy-fingered Dawn had chosen Orion, you gods who live at ease grudged him to her continually till at Ortygia chaste gold-throned Artemis attacked and slew him with her gentle arrows." V, 123.

Sleep sent by the gods:-

"Thus Odysseus hid himself in leaves and then Athena poured sleep upon his eyelids in order that she might quickly free him from the fatigue of toil, closing his dear eyelids."V,491.

"Thus he spoke and the guide, the Speedy-comer, did not disobey. Immediately he buckled on his sandals, immortal made of gold which bore him alike over the water and the mainland along with the breath of the wind.

He took his wand with which he charms the eyes of men whom he wishes or again, arouses those who are asleep. With this in hand the strong messenger flew." V,43.

Death from Zeus.

"When too fair-haired Demeter following her heart lay with Jason in the thrice-ploughed field, not long was Zeus unmindful, but he slew him, hurling his gleaming bolt."V,125.

Over human fortunes:-

"These are the threads of destiny the gods themselves have spun." XI,139.

"Already the immortals have planned death and dark fate for him." III,242.

"But the harsh doom of the gods prevented and the cruel charms and boorish herdsmen. But when months

and days went by as the year rolled on and the seasons came again, then at last the mighty Iphiklos loosed him, on his telling all the oracles and the will of Zeus was accomplished." XI, 292.

Producing misfortunes:-

"Now I know heaven is intending ill." XII, 295.

"Surely the Olympian gave me sorrow beyond all women." IV, 722.

"For we know all that the Argives and the Trojans suffered on the plains of Troy at the behests of the gods." XII, 189.

Good Fortune:-

"Easily far-famed is the offspring of the man for whom Zeus plans happiness at his wedding and birth." IV, 207.

"Surely for you the gods have not planned a race with unfamed future." I, 222.



"Certainly all things lie in the lap of the gods who shall be ~~shakk~~ ~~he~~ king of the Achaeans." I, 400.

Weddings and births:-

"His daughter he was giving to the son of rank-breaking Achilles; for long ago in Troy he had promised and agreed to give her and the gods had brought round the wedding for them." IV, 5.

"For Helen the gods no longer granted issue after she first bore her lovely child Hermione who had grace of golden Aphrodite." IV, 12.

Voyages on the sea:-

"At which time the gods decreed that he sail home to Ithica." I, 17.

"But now for him indeed the gods delayed his coming." I, 195.

"Certainly these things lie in the lap of the gods whether or not he will return and take vengeance." I, 267.

"He sang of the mournful return of the Achaeans from Troy which Pallas Athena directed." I, 327.

"I told him that when he came I would greet him far above all the Greeks if far-seeing Zeus granted that there be a return to our ships through the sea." IV, 173.

"But the god himself must have been envious who made the miserable man the only one failing to return." IV, 181.

"There the gods declaimed me(Menelaus) twenty days." IV, 360.

"You yourself tell me, for the gods know all things, which of the gods detains me and keeps me from my course." IV, 469.

"But we came here. So Zeus was willing to plant the return from Troy." IX, 262.

"My comrades fell from the ship, God cut them off from returning home." XII, 419.

"As for Telemachus send him wisely, for you are able, in order that he may arrive home safely and the suitors in their ships turn back again." V, 25.

"And if any of the gods should again wreck me in the wine-colored sea I will be patient for I have a trouble-tried heart." V, 221.

Talents:-

"Will she weary longer yet the sons of the Achaeans mindful in her heart that Athena has granted to her to understand beautiful works surpassingly and sound judgment and craft." II, 115.

"Mother, why do you object that the bard entertain us in whatever way his mind is aroused. Bards are not to blame, but Zeus me thinks it is who gives to laboring men what ever he wishes to each." I, 346.

" As when Haephaestos and Pallas Athena have taught all kinds of arts to fashion graceful works." VI, 232.

Honors:-

"These two in a kind of life the earth holds and they beneath the ground have honor from Zeus and are alive one day and dead the next. They are allotted honors equal with the gods." XI, 301.

"I should like to gain this (Throne) if Zeus gave it." I, 390.

"Certainly all things lie in the lap of the gods who shall be king of the Achaeans in sea-gird Ithaca." I, 401.

"By the favor of the gods treasures lie in my house." XI, 340.

"The revered mother gave the price and the sons the Achaeans and Pallas Athena." XI, 546.

IV. So all pervading was the oversight of the gods that they are pictured as absolute friends to certain men. For them they plan and strive. To them they add surpassing beauty when the occasion calls; gave them courage and needful powers, and decide courses of action for them. Many events whose cause was not clear were attributed to the unseen guidance of some God.

Friendship of the gods toward certain mortals:-

" To him again bright-eyed Athena spoke.

'Telemachus, you yourself will have some prompting in your own breast, others heaven will suggest,- for I do not think that you were born and bred without the friendship and good will of the gods." III, 28.

"The man is not alive, and never will be born

who can come to the Phaiakian land and offer harm; for we are very dear to the immortals." VI, 201.

"The only coursing ship which passed by was the Argo and her too they would have thrown against the great cliffs but Hera for love of Jason, brought it through." XII, 69.

Planning for their friends:-

Athena for Odysseus.

"Then if it pleases the immortal gods that Odysseus return to his native land, let us send forth Hermes to hear our plan to Kalypso. I myself, will go to the son to inspire him and send him to Sparta and Pylos to learn of the return of his father and to gain a name for himself." I, 89.

"To these (the gods) Athena mindful of Odysseus told of his many troubles, for she was troubled by his stay in the nymphs dwelling." V, 5.

"But Athena daughter of Zeus formed a new plan. She barred the path of all the other winds and commanded them to cease and to be laid to rest, but she stirred up bustling Boreas and broke the waves in front in order that god-nurtured Odysseus might come to the Phaiakians who love the oar after he had escaped death and doom." V.382.

Meeting of Odysseus and Nausikaa.

"But when Nausikaa prepared to turn toward home once more, to yoke the mules and fold up the clean clothes, elsewhere the goddess keen-eyed Athena turned her thoughts; for she would have Odysseus wake and see the bright-eyed maid who might to the Phaiakian city show the way." VI, 110.

Gifts to Odysseus.

" And they brought out the gifts which the Phaiakians prompted by Athena gave Odysseus when he was going home." XIII, 120.

Athena helping Telemachus.

"He(Telemachus) planned in his heart the journey which Athena pointed out." I, 444.

Special beauty:-

"Upon him Athena poured divine grace and all the people wondered as he came." II, 12.

"Him(Odysseus) Athena daughter of Zeus made taller and stronger to look upon and she made curly locks fall about his head as a hyacinth flower. So upon him she lay grace, upon his head and shoulders and going apart he sat on the strand of the sea, gleaming with beauty and grace and the maid observed it." VI, 229.



Gods inspiring certain feelings:-

Athena courage to Telemachus.

"In his heart she placed strength and courage and caused him to remember his father more than formerly." I, 321.

"To him again bright-eyed Athena spoke.

'Telemachus you yourself will have some prompting in your own brest others heaven will suggest.'" III, 25.

"Telemachus in turn answered him for Athena placed courage in his heart." III, 75.

A god inspires hatred against Telemachus.

"They say that the suitors of your mother will do ill against you. Tell me, do you submit willingly or do the people in your land hate you, led on by some god." III, 313.

Courage against the Cyclops.

"Then when the Olive stake within the fire was just about to catch, green as it was, and showed a fearful glow, I snatched it from the fire and my men stood around while god inspired great courage." IX, 388.

Athena gave courage to Nausikaa.

"Only the daughter of Alkinous stayed, for in her breast Athena had put courage and from her limbs took fear." VI, 139.

Athena gives wisdom to Odysseus.

" And his skin would have been torn off and his bones broken, had not the goddess bright-eyed Athena given him counsel." V, 427.

Memory.

"God himself will help you to remember." XII, 38.

Decision.

"As long as she retains the mind which the gods place in her breast." II, 125.

Special help:-

To do anything thoroughly.

" Which of the gods aided you son of Athens, in order that you might sieze me unwilling by ambuscade." IV, 462.

"Then Antinous said, "Telemachus surely the gods themselves have taught you to be a boaster and to speak courageously." I, 384.

Help by their presence:-

"Be of good cheer my nurse for this plan is not apart from God." II, 372.

" All men are in need of the gods." III, 48.

"We will have such an escort as other men have  
prayed to stand by them, for she is powerful,  
Pallas Athena." IV, 826.

"I brought the dog up hence and dragged him forth  
from Hades. Hermes was my guide- he and keen-eyed Athena."  
XI, 625.

" Your brother escaped, for powerful Here  
helped him." IV, 512.

Making their presence felt:-

Uncertain.

"Considering in his heart he wondered for he had a feeling that  
it was a god." I, 323.

Certainly.

"Then Telemachus spoke but in his heart he knew  
the immortal god." I, 420.

"Quickly fulfill my vows, dear children,  
in order that I may first satisfy Athena. She first came to  
me visibly at the rich feast of the gods." III, 419.

"Would that bright-eyed Athena would be willing to aid  
you as she cared for renowned Odysseus in the land of Troy

when we Achaeans suffered pain; for I never saw the gods openly befriend anyone as Pallas Athena stood by that one." III, 218.

Gods cause things whose cause is not clear:-

"Here we came landward in our ships silently into the sheltering harbor. Some god was our guide through the murky night." IX, 142; X, 141.

"And quickly god sent ample game." IX, 158; X, 158.

"Zeus now lets me see the unhopèd-for land." V, 409.

"Perhaps some mortal can tell you or you may hear a rumor from Zeus which especially bears news to mortals." I, 282; II, 216.

"Soon you came along. Some god must have commanded you who wished to accomplish glory for the Trojans." IV, 274.

"Odysseus pressed his strong hand against his mouth and held it until Athena led you away." IV, 288.

"I do not know whether some god impelled/<sup>him</sup>or his own heart to go to Pylos." IV, 712.

"The father of men and the gods permitted me not to see Scylla or else I should not have escaped sheer destruction." XII, 445.

Zeus friend of suppliants and strangers.

"But mighty one, respect the gods, for we are suppliants and Zeus is the avenger of suppliants and strangers." IX, 269.

"For all strangers and beggars are under the charge of Zeus." VI, 207.

The gods reward and punish.

All that is going on in the world the gods see and consequently know when to reward and when to punish. Good acts bring their reward.

The gods were as scrupulously careful in punishing sins of all kinds as they were in rewarding the good. Sin consisted in displeasing the gods and this might be done in several ways. A man might act directly contrary to the express command of the gods; punishment

often followed the indulgence in some act distasteful to the gods and many times failure to act when there was a just cause called down the wrath of the gods.

In fact so strong was this feeling that sin brings on suffering that the presence of suffering or misfortune of any kind was thought to be the result of some act displeasing to the gods. Sometimes men prayed to the gods to hasten the punishment of the evil doer.

Good acts rewarded:-

"Then answered Athena, bright-eyed goddess, certainly that man lies in befitting ruin. Thus may all others perish whoever does such things. But my heart suffers on account of god-like Odysseus hapless one who suffers apart from his friends." I, 44.

"Did not Odysseus please you by the side of the ships of the Argives offering sacrifice upon the broad plans of Troy." I, 60.

"The gods living at ease will not leave you to weep and be troubled; for still your son will be returned, for in the eyes of the gods he has not sinned." IV, 806.

Aegyptos for Telemachus.

"He seems to me to be good. may Zeus accomplish for him whatever good he desires in his heart."II,34.

Sin brings on suffering:-

Breaking the express commands of the gods.

"For we ourselves forewarned him(Aigisthus), dispatching Hermes, the keen-eyed Speedy-comer, and told him not to slay the man nor woo his wife. 'For because of the son of Atreus shall come vengeance from Orestes when he is grown and feels desire for land'. This Hermes spoke but he did not turn the purpose of Aigisthus by his kindness. Now he has made a full atonement for it all." I,38.

"Even yet though suffering ill you will arrive at home if you are willing to restrain your own passion and the hearts of your companions when first you bring your ships to the Thrinikian island having escaped the dark sea and come upon the grazing cattle and sturdy flocks of the Sun who see all things and hears all things. XI, 104.

"They perished because of their own perversity who ate up the cattle of the exalted Sun, and he took

away their day of return." I, 8.

Acts hateful to the gods,-

"Against her will I cannot drive her from the house, the one who bore me and who brought me up.----  
For from my father's hand I shall meet ill and others  
god will send when my mother calls upon the dread  
avengers as she forsakes the house." II, 131.

"God scattered the Achaeans. Then indeed Zeus  
planned a mournful return for the Argives for they were  
not all wise and upright." III, 131.

"For Zeus prepares suffering for wickedness." III, 152.

Ajax.

"And now he might have escaped, though hated by  
Athena had he not uttered proud words and great arrogance,  
for he said he had escaped the grief of the sea against  
the will of the gods." IV, 503.

"And it certainly was destined that your evil  
deeds find you out, bold one, since you did not hesitate  
to eat guests in your own house. For this did Zeus and  
the other gods punish you." IX, 477.



"About his(~~T~~antalus)feet the black earth appeared, god made it dry." XI, 587.

"Now I desire to dash to pieces the beautiful ship of the Phaiakians coming back from its escorting upon the misty sea that at last they may check themselves and cease to escort men." VIII, 148.

"And the Earth-shaker came 'near it(the ship) and changed it into stone and rooted her beneath forcing her with his hand and went away." XIII, 163.

Punishment from failure to act:-

"Do not go away and leave me behind unburied and unmourned deserting me lest I become the cause of the anger of the gods against you." XI, 73.

"Me though eager to sail the gods yet de<sup>a</sup>stined in Egypt since I had not accomplished a due offering." IV, 351.

"Ah me, I fear that some one of the immortals is plotting against me when it bids me to embark from

my boat but I will not yet obey-----.

While he pondered these things in his heart and mind the Earth-shaker, Poseidon, stirred up a great wave, terrible and grievous with bended crest and drove it at him."V, 356.

"You should be angry yourselves or be ashamed before the neighbors. Be afraid of the gods lest being vexed they turn their wrath on you." II, 65.

"For god may send upon me a monster from the sea and many such great Amphitrite nourishes, for I know the strong Earth-shaker is very angry at me." V, 421.

Prayers for Vengeance:-

Prayers that gods will cause evil doers to ~~ατομε~~

"I will call upon the ever living gods in the hope that Zeus will give deeds of requital. Then un-  
avenged you shall perish within this house."

Zeus answered this. I, 378; II, 144.

"May not the son of Kronos make you king in sea-girded Ithaca although it is yours by inheritance."

Not answered. I, 386.

"Ye other blessed gods avenge me upon the comrades of the son of Laertes, Odysseus who violently killed my kine is which I delighted. When I go into the starry heavens or when again toward the earth I turn my back from the heavens. If they do not make a fit atonement for my cattle I will go down to Hades and shine among the dead." Answered by the destruction of Odysseus' comrades. XII, 377.

"Then he prayed to lord Poseidon stretching out his hands to the starry heaven. Hear me, oh Earth-holder, dark-haired one. If I am yours and you boast of being my father, grant that Odysseus may not arrive home but it is destined that he see his friends and arrive at his well-built house and fatherland, may he come late and with difficulty, having lost his companions, and coming on the vessel of another and find troubles in his home. Thus he prayed and Poseidon heard him." IX, 526.

This prayer was fully answered.

"O Nestor, son of Neleus surely that one took vengeance would that the gods would cloth such power to me to avenge the suitors for their evil trespasses."

The power was given. III, 202.

"But for himself may Zeus destroy his powers before he reaches manhood." IV, 668.

This prayer was not answered.

"Then cloud-gathering Zeus answering addressed him 'For shame, mighty Earth-shaker, how you talk . The gods do not dishonor you at all. It would be hard to dishonor our oldest and our best and if any mortal, relying on strength and force, dishonor you, vengeance will be yours hereafter. Do what you wish and satisfy your heart.'" XIII, 140. Answered.

Sufferings imply sin:-

"I Tell you, which ever one of the gods you are, that I have not been detained willingly, but I must have offended the immortals who hold the broad heaven." IV.376.

"Ill-starred one, pray why does Poseidon, the Earth-shaker rage so furiously that he makes woes spring up around you." V. 340.

Some times men seemed to commit evils unconsciously. Again a divinity was pictured as placing evil in men's minds. At one time a man blames his own undoing on his own folly and on some god. Indeed Zeus complains that mortals blame evils on the gods. In a great majority of cases, however, men's own acts condemn them so that they are usually on their guard even calling the gods to witness to their acts by means of oaths.

Men blame evil on the gods:-

"Lo, how men do blame the gods! From us they say evils come." I, 32.

"Stranger since now you have asked me, I will tell you that this house was once wealthy when he yet was at home, but now the ill-thinking gods wished it otherwise." I, 232.

"I do not mourn him alone but upon me the gods have brought other evil." I, 243.

"So many a one came to an evil end though the dread wrath of the dread fathers' keen-eyed child, who caused a strife between the sons of Atreus." III, 134.

"But Zeus, cruel one, did not plan a return who again stirred up a second strife." III, 160.

"And I mourned the infatuation which Aphrodite gave when she led me here away from my native land." IV, 260.

"Many are the woes which the gods of heaven give to me." IX, 15.

"Indeed an evil lot sent from Zeus beset our doomed men that they might suffer many ills." IX, 52.

"If then indeed no one harms you since you are alone, it is not possible to escape the disease of great Zeus; but pray to your father lord Poseidon." IX, 410.

"How have you come, Odysseus? What evil god has assailed you." X, 64.

"And soon the gods made the thing known to men and he in pleasant Thebes, suffering woe ruled over the Cadmaeans on account of the destructive plan of the gods." XI, 274.

"Alas, from the beginning far-seeing Zeus has plagued the race of Atreus with the arts of woman." XI, 436.

"As a plague the gods gave it(armor) to the Argives for it destroyed such a tower for them." XI, 555.

"Groaning I called aloud to the immortal gods."

'Oh, father Zeus and ye other blessed gods that live forever. Verily for my ruin you lulled me into ruthless sleep while my companions planned a ruthless deed." XII, 370.

"Now, a god has cast me here that I may perhaps suffer some evil in this place." VI, 172.

"An evil doom of god betrayed me and excess of wine. In the palace of Circe, lying down, I did not notice how to comedown again by the long ladder but I fell headlong from the roof. My neck was broken from its socket and my spirit went down to Hades." XI, 61.

"But when at last the lot of the gods constrained her to be overcome, he led away the bard to a lone isle and abandoned him to be the prey of birds." III, 269.

Oaths

By Men:-

"You should be angry of yourselves or be ashamed before the neighbors. Be afraid of the gods lest being vexed they turn their wrath on you, I intreat Olympian Zeus and Justice who adjourns and convenes the assemblies of Men." II, 68.

"Thus he spoke and the old woman swore the great oath of the gods not to tell." II, 377.

"If, Oh father Zeus, Athena and Apollo, he would come!-----If as he was that day Odysseus might meet the suitors they all would find quick turns of fate and bitter rites of marriage. IV, 341.

By Gods:-

Klypso.

"Hear me, Earth, Heaven broad above and the downward flowing water of the Styx which is the greatest and most terrible oath among the immortal gods."



The Homeric gods appear often in intimate connection with men. By omens and prophescy they clearly show their will to men. Men's prayers, sacrifices, and libations are gladly received by the gods and often immediately answered.

Omens:-

" May you unavenged perish within this house. This spoke Telemachus and for him far-seeing Zeus sent two eagles flying from the mountain tops-----They tore each others cheeks and necks and darted to the right across the house and city.----- I proclaiming say to the suitors that a great destruction is rolling upon them." II, 145.

"Immediately for them the gods made appear: the skin would crawl: the flesh about the

spitts both raw and roast would moan and sounds came forth like those of kine." XII, 394.

"Then Alkinous spoke and addressed them, 'Alas surely the ancient oracles of my father have come to pass who said Poseidon was angry at us because we are safe guides of all men. He said one day a beautiful ship of the Phae~~a~~rians returning from escorting on the misty sea would be shattered and a great mountain would be thrown about the city'. Thus the old man spoke and these things are now accomplished." XIII, 171.

Prophecy:-

"But now I will prophesy to you as the gods put it in my mind just how I think it will happen. Hence forth not long will he be absent from his own dear land, though iron fetters bind him." I, 200.

"I prophesying say to the suitors that a great destruction is rolling upon them." II, 168.

WORSHIP.

Prayers.

Prayers of gods to gods:-

Sun to the other gods.

"Ye other blessed gods avenge me upon the comrades of the son of Laertes, Odysseus, who violently killed my kine in which I delighted. When I go into the starry heavens or when again toward the earth I turn my back from the heavens, if they do not make me fit atonement for my cattle. I will go down to Hades and shine among the dead."  
XII, 877.

This prayer was answered by the complete destruction of the comrades of Odysseus.

Athena prays to Poseidon.

"Hearken, Poseidon thou girder of the land, and count it not too much to give thy suppliants these blessings. First upon Nestor and his sons bestow all honor; then to the rest grant gracious recompense, to all the men of Pylos for their splendid sacrifice; and

grant still further that Telemachus and I may sail away, having accomplished that for which we came, we and our swift black ship.'

Thus did she pray and was herself fulfilling all." III, 55.

Prayers of men for help:-

" And having placed barley in a basket she prayed to Athena.

'Hear me, O, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, unwearied one, if at any time the wise Odysseus burned to you the fat thigh of ox or sheep. Now remember these for my sake and save my beloved son." IV, 760.

Her prayer was answered.

"Imploring the gods much I went along the shore." IV, 433.

"But I was left behind brooding on ill how I might take vengeance and Athena grant me glory." IX, 316.

"If haply Zeus may grant that we escape this danger." XII, 145.

"Then I departed far up the island in order that I might pray to the gods to show my homeward way." XII, 333.

"May the gods make them blessed-----May the gods bestow all kinds of prosperity and may there not be any evil at home." XIII, 42.

"Harken to me, oh child of aegis-bearing Zeus, unwearied one, hear me now though formerly you did not hear me when I was wrecked when the great Earth-shaker wrecked me. Grant that I may come among the Phaiakians loved and pitied by them. So he prayed and Athena heard him but she did not appear to him openly for she still regarded her father's brother who furiously raged against godlike Odysseus until he reached his native land." VI, 324.

"We begged god for a sign and he showed us to cut through the middle of the sea to Euboea in order that we might most quickly flee from danger." III, 173.

"We two partaking of the abundant hospitality of other men have come here, may Zeus hereafter give us rest from trouble." IV, 33.

"Hear me, O lord, who ever thou art, I come to you long sought by prayers. I fleeing from the threats of Poseidon-----Pity me, lord, I boast myself a suppliant, Thus he spoke and the god straight way stayed the current and restrained the billows and before him made a calm and brot him safely into the mouth of the river." V, 4451.

Libations:-

"They poured libations to the immortal everlasting gods and above all to the bright-eyed daughter of Zeus." II, 343.

"Bright-eyed Athena said, 'Old man you have spoken these things within bounds, but come cut the tongue and mix the wine in order that having offered libations to Poseidon we may be mindful of repose.'" III, 330.

"Then I will give you a beautiful chalice in order that mindful of me each day you will pour libations to the immortal gods." IV, 590.

Sacrifice.

Thanksgiving:-

"We placed the thighs of many bulls on Poseidon's alter because we had measured the mighty sea." III, 178.

"Many thighs he burned on the **altars** of the gods and many splendid gifts he offered woven stuff and gold because he had achieved a great deed which he had not hoped in his heart." III, 273.

Sacrifices before eating.

"There having kindled a fire we made burnt offerings and taking cheese we ate." IX, 231.

"And they went to the house of Alcen8us and turned to feasting and for them Alcen8us sacrificed a sacret ox to dark-clouded Zeus, the son of Kronos who is lord over all and having burned the thigh pieces they held a glorious feast rejoicing." XIII, 23.

#### Sacrifice:

#### Detailed description of a sacrifice:-

"So after they had prayed and strewn the barley-meal, forth with the son of Nestor, ardent Thrasymedes, drew near and dealt the blow. The ox cut through the cords of the neck and broke the heifer's power. A cry went up from the daughters of Nestor, the son's wives, and his own

honored wife, Enrydike, the eldest of the daughters of Klymenos. The sons then raised the beast up from the trodden earth and held her so, the while Peisistratos ever the foremost, cut the throat. And after the black blood had flowed and life had left the carcase, they straightway laid it open, quickly cut out the thighs, all in due order, wrapped them in fat in double layers, and placed raw flesh thereon. On billets of wood the old man burned them, and over all poured out the sparkling wine while the young men at his side held five-  
So after the thighs were burned and the inward parts were tasted they sliced the rest, and stuck the bits on spits and roasted all, holding the pointed spits in hand."III,444.

"Round the cattle they stood and prayed to the gods stripping the tender leaves from the crested oak for they had no white barley in their stately ships, and when they had prayed and cut their throats and flayed them, they cut away the thighs and covered them with fat in double layers and placed raw flesh thereon. They had no wine to pour upon the sacred victim but using water for libation they roasted all the entrails. When they had burned the thighs and the inward parts had been tasted they



sliced the rest and drew it over spits." XII, 356.

"Nine groups of them there were, five hundred sat in each and before each group men held nine bulls in waiting. Just after they had tasted the inward parts and now were burning to the gods the thigh-pieces, the two ran swiftly in." III, 5.

"Come then let us drive away the cattle of the sun and sacrifice them to the immortal gods who hold the open sky. If we should ever come to Ithaca, our native land, we would build a rich temple to the exalted Sun and place many fair offerings therein." XII, 343.

"Oh, Queen be merciful, give me great honor for myself and children and my honored wife and then I will sacrifice to you a sleek broad-browed unmastered cow which man has never yoked." III, 387.

"Agamemnon wished to detain the people in order to sacrifice that thus he might appease the dreadful wrath of Athena." III, 144.

"For it is not fated that you shall see your friends or reach your stately house until you go to the

waters of the heaven descended river of Egypt and offer the sacred hecatomos." IV, 475.

"But come as I have spoken let us all do. Refuse exhort to men when any come to our city. Let us sacrifice to lord Poseidon twelve chosen bulls that he may have pity and not throw a lofty mountain about our city." XIII, 179.

"This I sacrificed on the shore to Zeus, the son of Kronos, and burned the thighs but he did not heed my sacrifice." IX, 550.

So close was the relation of the gods to men that they often disguised themselves in human form and associated with men. They appeared in the form of some friend giving valuable advice and assistance, or they might appear as animal, in two cases.

#### Appearances of the gods.

##### Human Beings:-

As Friend.

"Down from the heights of Olympos Athena came

and stood at the door of Odysseus and with a spear in her hand she likened herself to ~~Mentes~~." I, 102.

"Thus he prayed and near him Athena came taking the appearance of ~~Mentor~~ both in form and voice." II, 267.

"Then again bright-eyed Athena conceived a new plan and assuming the form of Telemachus in all things and standing by each man she spoke to him and she ordered them to collect at the swift ship at eventide." II, 382.

"Then she addressed Telemachus calling him from the well-built house likening herself to ~~Mentor~~ both in form and voice." II, 399.

"The bright-eyed Athena went to his house planning a return for brave Odysseus and entered the richly chamber in which the daughter Nausikaa was sleeping like to the gods in form and beauty. The shining door was closed but Athena as a breath of wind moved on to the bed of the maiden and thus addressed her, taking the form of the daughter of Dymas, a famous seaman." VI, 12.

A being made by Athena:-

" And she went to the home of the godlike Odysseus that she might stop Penelope's weeping and mourning. It entered the chamber along the strap of the doorway and stood at her head and addressed her."IV,795.

As Animal:-

"When she had spoken thus bright-eyed Athena went away taking the form of an osprey." III, 371.

"Thus then the goddess spoke and gave him the wimple and quickly she plunged into the billowy sea in the likeness of a petrel." V, 351.

The gods are pictured as going to and going from earth to Olympus with the utmost ease and frequency and seem to feel equally at home in both places. It was natural that the gods should so easily associate with men; for they had all the human feelings. They pity, rejoice, become angry and will go great distances to enjoy a feast. So like to men are the gods that superior mortals have been changed into gods. Surely these marvelous Homeric gods were in a human mould.

Gods possessing Human feelings.

Pity:-

"All the gods pitied him except Poseidon. He was ceaselessly angry at the god-like Odysseus."

"Now I would have consumed all my substance and the courage of my companions if a certain one of the goddesses had not pitied me and saved me." IV, 363.

"He will have such an escort as other men have prayed for to stand by them-for she is powerful Pallas Athene<sup>a</sup>. She pitied you weeping and has sent me to tell you this." IV, 826.

"Then some one of the gods took pity on me being thus alone and sent a stag with branching horns across my path." X, 157.

"Him the daughter of Cadmus saw, fair-ankled Ino, who formerly had been mortal with human voice, but now in the depth of the sea she shared the honor of the gods. She then pitied Odysseus cast away and having trouble." V, 333.

Pleasure:-

"Here indeed an immortal if he came and this might wonder and rejoice in heart." V, 74.

"Poseidon was gone among the far-off Ethiopians--  
-----There to share a hecatomb of bulls and rams. So sitting at the feast he enjoyed himself." I, 25.

"Having spoken thus he placed the cup of sweet wine in her hand. Athena was pleased with this discreet man because he gave to her first the golden chalice." III, 51.

Envy:-

"You gods are harsh and envious above all who grudge to goddesses to marry mortal man openly." V, 118.

"But the god himself must have been envious who made the miserable man the only one failing to return." IV, 181.

Wrath:-

"Beware the wrath of Zeus." V, 146.

"No other cause but Zeus placed this fate upon you for he hates bitterly the army of the Danaan spearmen." XI, 559.

"Then answered Zeus," I could not forget Odysseus but Poseidon always is angry because he has destroyed the eye of his divine son Polyphemos." I, 64.

"Nor to shun the wrath of Zeus would I spare you or your companions." IX, 277.

Mortals changed into divinities:-

"Him the daughter of Cadmos saw, fair-ankled ~~the~~ a pale goddess who formerly had been mortal with human voice, but now in the depth of the sea she shared the honor of the gods. She then pitied Odysseus cast away and having trouble." V, 333.

"And next I marked the might of Herakles,- him phantom form; for he himself is with the immortal gods reveling at their feasts, wed to fair-ankled Hebe, child of great Zeus and golden-sandled Here." XI, 601.

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